RAB Minutes

NAS North Island

Restoration Advisory Board

CTO-009

Subject: RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday December 12, 1996

The thirty-first Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting for Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island was held on Thursday, December 12, 1996, in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Arno Bernardo, Navy Co-Chair for the NAS North Island RAB, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m., and welcomed RAB and community members.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from the September 11, 1996 RAB Meeting

The September 11, 1996, RAB meeting minutes were approved with one abstention.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from the November 7, 1996 RAB Meeting

The November 7, 1996, RAB meeting minutes were amended and approved. Ms. Marsha Mingay, Public Participation Specialist with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), requested that the first paragraph on page 6 read the following:

- "Ms. Marsha Mingay, Public Participation Specialist with DTSC, informed RAB members that the Department of Defense stated that they will fund DTSC at last year's budget rate, through DSMOA negotiations. Based on this information, DTSC will participate at RABs. However, we will be sending a representative based upon agenda items. Ms. Mingay mentioned that if anyone would like to discuss the draft Permit or mixed waste issue, she would be available after the meeting. Ms. Mingay also added that the proposed regulation addressing RABs was circulated during a 60-day comment period. DTSC made comments on that rule and sent them to Washington D.C. (copies of the DTSC comments were distributed to RAB members)"

Public member Ms. Marylin Field asked that the minutes include her request for the Navy to research barging as an option for transporting bins from the mercury spill. Mr. Bill Collins, SWDIV Team Leader, recalled that at the last meeting he explained that the contractors that the government hires do not, and are not allowed to use government equipment to do the job; they have to go out and get their own equipment. Ms. Field wanted more thorough analyses of this option presented to the RAB. Mr. Bernardo informed RAB members that the issue of barges will be discussed later in the meeting. Ms. Dottie Marron, RAB Community Co-Chair, suggested the topic of barging become an agenda item for the next meeting.

Public member Ms. Stephanie Kaupp reiterated her past request to have a copy of the transcript placed in the information repository at the library. After some discussion pertaining to library space, it was decided to place a copy of the meeting transcript in the information repository every month.

RAB member Mr. Richard Dittbenner suggested the Public Affairs Officer provide transcripts and meeting minutes on the world-wide-web page set up for the Navy. Mr. Collins informed Mr. Dittbenner that the minutes from NAS North Island RAB meetings are already available on the Navy's web page. Mr. Richard Mach, Southwest Division (SWDIV) Remedial Project Manager, noted that the Navy must discuss the proposition of placing transcripts on the web page before a decision is made.

Mercury Spill Emergency Removal Action

Ms. Kim Wheeler, SWDIV Remedial Project Manager, provided the RAB with an update on the mercury spill removal action.

- As previously reported, elemental mercury (Hg) was released when a Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) sitting aboard an escort boat parked at "Berth Oscar" inadvertently operated the Hg jettison system, spilling some Hg into San Diego Bay.

- Since the last RAB meeting, round 2 of phase 3 (hydraulic dredge) has been completed. On November 15, 1996, the project team met to review results of verification sampling from round 2. The average mercury concentration found was 3.24 parts per million (ppm); the cleanup goal is 0.71 ppm total mercury.

- 196 grids were laid out over the area, taking one sample from each grid. When the concentration range vs. the frequency was graphed, it demonstrated a higher number of clean grids (149 grids were found clean after round 1, and 178 were found clean after round 2).

- The team decided to conduct another round (3) of hydraulic dredging to bring the average from 3.24 ppm to 0.71 ppm. The dredging spanned from Novemb er 20, 1996, through December 4, 1996. Sixteen bins of dredged material were generated including 250 tons of sediment, producing 700,000 gallons of bay water. The water was sampled, found to be non-hazardous, and discharged down the sanitary sewer. As always, dredging was, followed by verification sampling conducted from December 5, 1996, to December 6, 1996. During the period of December 2, 1996, through December 11, 1996, 34 bins of dredged material were shipped off-base to a disposal facility.

There have been no injuries or accidents reported, and no spills. The estimated cost of the latest round of dredging is $250,000. Ms. Wheeler pointed out that at the last meeting the estimated cost for dredging was $713,000, Due to an oversight on her part, Ms. Wheeler stated she had failed to include the $120,000 spent by the Deep Submergence unit when the spill first occurred. Therefore, if the $120,000 is added to the $713,000 plus the estimated cost of the latest dredging, the amount adds up to approximately $1.1 million.

- The project team will meet on December 13, 1996, to review the latest verification sampling results and determine future actions. The recently gathered dredged material will be characterized in preparation for off-site disposal.

Answering a question posed by Mr. Dittbenner, Ms. Wheeler restated that the cleanup goal of 0.71 ppm is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Effects Range-Median (ER-M) number for mercury, which reflects mercury background levels in the turning basin.

Ms. Wheeler informed Mr. Dittbenner that background levels in San Diego Bay vary from area to area. Mr. Dittbenner questioned the number of trucks expected to be used when transporting bins. Mr. Jon Bruton, OHM Remediation, stated that 23 bins needed to be trucked thus far. Mr. Bruton expects 4 trucks to transport 7 bins on December 13, 1996, and approximately 16 more bins to be trucked during January 1997.

Answering a question posed by Mr. Sandor Kaupp, representing RAB member Ms. Laura Hunter, Mr. Bruton estimated that each sample dredge taken ranges from 6 inches deep to 3 1/2 feet deep.

Mr. Kaupp read a Jacob's Engineering database study of sites and the turning basin with results indicating that 2 to 4 feet down the concentration of mercury goes up quite a bit. Mr. Kaupp wondered how the Navy will know if it is cleaning current mercury pollution or historical pollution. Mr. Collins noted that said study was done in the late 1980s and discussed an area far from this spill area. Mr. Collins also added that Jacob's Engineering used the information from another study, and never sampled the area themselves. Mr. Mach believed that it may be possible the Navy is cleaning mercury levels resulting from other incidents, and wondered if in time the bay will self-clean itself of mercury. Mr. Kaupp did not believe it would.

Responding to a comment made by Mr. Dittbenner, Mr. Bernardo noted that other than the DSRV, there are no activities that could create another mercury spill. Mr. Collins pointed out that as a result of this incident the Navy has learned better management skills and more careful techniques.

Ms. Wheeler informed RAB member Mr. Howard Bacon that the facility used for the disposal of sediment gathered from the mercury spill cleanup is Kettleman Hills located in Bakersfield, California.

Ms. Field objected to the Navy's decision to use trucks to transport bins without researching the possibility of barging and presenting analysis to the RAB. Mr. Bernardo explained that the option was researched and found to be more expensive than trucks. Ms. Field informed Ms. Wheeler that she is concerned about the possibility of accidents and truck spills, and the number of trips the trucks will take through the neighborhoods. Ms. Wheeler assured Ms. Field that analysis of barging was done (for cost as well as risks) due to her previous request. However, there is a 90-day storage limit (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [RCRA] requirement) for the Navy to move bins off-site, and the Navy could not wait until the next RAB meeting to make a decision. Ms. Marron suggested presenting any analyses and information gathered concerning barging at the next meeting.

Answering a question posed by Ms. Kaupp, Ms. Wheeler stated that no emission credits were purchased. Mr. Mach informed Ms. Field that the Navy pays the City of San Diego $3.77 per 1,000 gallons of water discharged through their sanitary sewer.

Mr. Bruton informed Ms. Mingay and other attendees that the Navy is charged landfill fees; $60 per ton for a tipping fee, and a separate freight fee for unloading and cleaning. The deposit fee at the landfill is running about $80-$100 per ton.

A discussion ensued about money being the basis of many Navy removal decisions. Mr. Collins noted that the money being spent is from taxpayers' pockets. Ms. Wheeler added that the money used for this cleanup did not come from Installation Restoration (IR) cleanup site money given to the Navy by DERA, it came out of a different account used for other activities. Mr. Dittbenner believed that more money needs to be spent in order to ensure a stable environment, and failure to pay this money now will allow the environment to deteriorate and cost more in the long run. Ms. Field commented that the Navy complains of the cleanup costs and other alternatives, but continues to have activities close to neighborhoods. Ms. Field felt that not enough evaluation was done on cost vs. alternatives.

Updated Spill Contingency Plan

Mr. Bernardo informed RAB members that the Navy is updating a spill contingency plan to address mercury spills. The document, called "Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Contingency Plan," addresses mercury as well as other types of substances found on North Island. The plan will include lessons learned, as well as plans to retrain and re-certify personnel involved. The new plan allows the on-scene commander to make necessary decisions when responding to a spill, including notification and close-out

procedures. Mr. Bernardo passed the revised document around for the RAB to view.

Sites 9 & 11 Update

Mr. Mach gave a brief presentation on NAS North Island Sites 9 and 11.

- Additional work at Site 9 did not occur on the scheduled weekend of November 9-11 due to logistical coordination with the Weapons department. Since then, the work has been completed. Clean soil and plastic cover all exposed areas, all wells are in place, and an alarm system had been installed along with additional health and safety personnel monitoring the sites. Both the Weapons department and NADEP personnel are satisfied with the work completed.

- A transformer has been installed on Site 11, making the 24-hour operation schedule possible. An auto-dialer has also been included (in case of any system malfunction, designated individuals will be automatically called through the activation system).

Mr. Doug Chen, OHM Remediation, gave the RAB a status report on construction at Sites 9 and 11.

- On Site 11 construction has been completed. The contaminants influent vaporization is 360 ppm by volume, of which 80 percent is petroleum hydrocarbons and 20 percent chlorinated Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC). The effluent ranges from 0 to 12 ppm as measured by a continuous emissions monitoring system; the emissions rate based on the current make up of the 12 ppm is 0.04 tons per year.

- Some wells were not producing any vapor, so 15 out of 35 wells were turned off to increase influent concentration from 30 ppm to 360 ppm. These wells will be monitored later.

- To date, 750 pounds of VOCs have been collected.

Mr. Chen informed Ms. Marron that the emissions originally expected were 25 ppm constantly.

Answering a question posed by Ms. Field, Mr. Chen noted that hazardous VOCs collected were placed in a 2,000 gallon tank and will be picked up by a facility, refined, and sold. Mr. Chen assured Ms. Field that the tankers are permitted transporters by DTSC and that if a spill occurs on-site it will be contained in a concrete pad so it can be pumped back into the tank; everything is controlled and there is minimal risk involved with this activity. Mr. Mach also told Ms. Fields that the transport of these trucks off of NAS North Island are currently planned for about one every 10 weeks and would pose the same risk of a gasoline delivery truck to a retail gas station. Mr. Chen informed Ms. Field that emission credits (9 tons of VOCs) were purchased.

Mr. Chen agreed with Mr. Kaupp that the emission credits purchased will probably not all be used for this operation because of the low concentrations and emissions. Mr. Mach informed Mr. Kaupp that the Navy is not very surprised with the low numbers, because the estimated influent concentrations first presented to the RAB were conservative and the pilot test for Site 11 was done at the hottest level areas and it was assumed that all the wells would have equal concentration. Mr. Chen noted that the numbers may increase as air sparging begins.

- Upcoming tasks include 24-hour operation, limited air sparging, and reinjection of exhaust.

- Site 9 construction is still ongoing, but subsurface piping has been completed. On January 10,

1997, above-ground piping will be completed. Data will be collected and presented to the RAB.

- Re-injection of exhaust (injecting air into the soil) will be applied at Site 9 air sparging (injecting air into the groundwater) will be investigated after results from Site 11 are evaluated.

Mr. Chen informed Ms. Field that air monitoring is not being conducted in Coronado. Mr. Mach added that air monitoring is not required when emissions are below the amount of credits purchased and below allowable emissions (ensuring the Navy does not increase the existence of a cancer risk past one in a million). Mr. Mach added that the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) conducted the risk analyses, which is in the public library for RAB viewing. Ms. Wheeler noted that the City has a responsibility to pay for monitoring the air as well since pollution can come fromother sources, such as gas stations, not just the Navy's projects.

Mr. Mach pointed out that according to APCD the cleanest air blows towards Coronado from the ocean. Ms. Marron requested more monitoring of cumulative sites around Coronado be conducted and presented to the RAB. Ms. Marron also reminded members that Ms. Hunter's presentation will discuss the topic of air toxins around NAS North Island.

A discussion took place regarding RAB member Ms. Laura Hunter's presentation on air monitoring results and her toxic map. Several attendees felt it should be an agenda item for the next meeting. Mr. Bernardo reiterated that the RAB's purpose is to address IR topics only, and that Ms. Hunter's presentation is not NAS North Island-specific. Mr. Collins added that the RABs had been recently reprimanded for going beyond the Department of Defense's (DoD) specifications. Ms. Mingay believed that the RAB has complied with DoD regulations. Ms. Mingay added that the RAB was setup by Keystone Committee which allows RABs to be open to all pertinent issues. Mr. Bernardo stated that until the new DoD guidelines, which allow for more topic leeway, are in effect, the Navy will have to follow current policy. Mr. Kaupp noted that he appreciates the efforts of the Navy in informing the NAS North Island RAB and the public beyond DoD specifications.

Responding to RAB member Larry McCauley's comment, Mr. Collins relayed that vapor extraction units may be used for many years to come, since they are one of the favored site restoration techniques. Mr. Mach clarified that at some point in the process, there is no additional gain in keeping SVE systems on 24-hour schedules, they must be operated in cycles. Mr. Collins clarifies that it's hard to know exactly how long this system will be used, right now it will definitely continue through September 1997.

Mr. Mach informed Ms. Kaupp that there are several awards given to groups for cleanup efforts and projects including: cash prizes, annual awards ceremonies, time off, and personal awards.

RAB Community Co-Chair Nomination and Voting

The nomination of Ms. Marron for Community Co-Chair took place at the last meeting, and is still on the table for this evening. Since no other nominations were proposed, Ms. Marron was unanimously voted the RAB Community Co-Chair. Her position will run from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 1997.

Ms. Marron announced the dates for the next RAB meetings. The January meeting will be held on Thursday, 16 January 1997, and the meeting in February will be held on Wednesday, 19 February 1997.

On 16 January 1997, Ms. Hunter will give a presentation at 6:15. Mr. Mach suggested that the RAB Co-Chairs speak with Ms. Hunter, hear her topics, and decide whether her presentation will be related to IR issues on NAS North Island. The outcome will determine if Ms. Hunter's presentation should be an agenda bullet, or a separate presentation.

Ms. Marron requested barging as a topic for the next meeting's agenda.

Mr. Mach proposed coordinating with the Air Pollution Control Board to give a talk on the air contaminants on this presentation.

Ms. Kaupp requested the minutes and a brief outline of the agenda be published in the paper before every meeting. Ms. Marron noted that there is a notice and a description of topics in the "Coronado Eagle" newspaper.

Mr. Dittbenner recommended RAB members read a book on VOCs written by Theo Colburn called "Our Stolen Future," that depicts the impact of VOCs on human health.

The next RAB meeting is scheduled for 16 January 1997, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library.

Mr. Bernardo adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.